

gentleman from Arizona (Mr. FLAKE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arizona.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Chairman, just once I would love to hear the other side say, we have no objection to that amendment and will accept it, but I suppose I won't be so lucky today.

This amendment would prevent \$100,000 in funding for the Hunting and Fishing Museum in Pennsylvania and reduce the cost of the bill by a corresponding amount.

Mr. Chairman, my staff and I have never had a hard time fishing for earmarks that seem to be fiscally irresponsible, but this one seemed to be a particularly easy catch. It seems that there is no museum that we will not fund. We have funded teapot museums. We've funded mule museums. We have funded rock and roll halls of fame. Now, we're being asked to fund a museum honoring the time-honored hobbies of hunting and fishing.

According to the earmark description, the earmark would fund the development and creation of interactive, educational and historical exhibits. According to the Web site for the Hunting and Fishing Museum, the museum came as a result of its location in a forest area of Pennsylvania where hunting and fishing are already big industries.

I enjoy fishing and hunting as much as the next person, but I'm not convinced that the Federal Government has a role here. I'd like to have explained what the Federal nexus is.

According to the National Association for Sporting Goods, the hunting industry did \$2.8 billion in business sales in 2004. For fiscal year 2003, the fishing industry's retail sales totaled over \$40 billion. With these kind of profits, why are these industries relying on the Federal Government to fund a museum honoring their pastimes? Are we not picking winners and losers when we select only a handful of museums to fund? Is this a fair and equitable process?

More than that, more than being equitable, some say if everybody is given the chance and there's an account to do this, that it's okay, that it's justified, everybody's getting theirs, let me get mine. But I think, particularly for us on this side of the aisle who say that we believe in limited government, economic freedom, individual responsibility, it seems a particularly hard sell.

I'm not making fun of the hobbies of hunting and fishing. As I mentioned, I do a fair amount of both myself. But here I just fail to see a Federal nexus and a Federal role.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the amendment and claim the time.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Pennsylvania is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Chairman, I find it ironic today the

maker of this amendment represents one of the more affluent parts of America, one of the parts of America that wouldn't be there, wouldn't be growing and prospering without billions and billions of Federal investment.

We can start with the 336-mile diversion canal that diverts water from the Colorado River so they can irrigate the desert and make it a city. It seems to me that's a pretty expensive economic development project taking desert and making it grow.

Mesa last year, his home area, \$35 million of their budget is Federal money, and he keeps talking about the process. Well, I think I understand the process, and I'd be glad to debate the process with him any day, anytime, anywhere. I've been in business all my life, retailing. I served in local government 8 years, State government 19 years, Federal Government 11 years, and I understand process.

Rural America is not a part of the process of funds from the Federal Government. This bureaucracy you brag about how they allocate money and how they hand it out as if this was some pure process. Rural communities don't have planning departments. They don't have planning directors. They don't have consultants. They don't hire lobbyists like Mesa and Phoenix and Arizona do. They're fighting for their economic lives.

This little forest county is less than 10,000 people. I think the population went from close to 5,500 to 7,500 because we opened a prison there. It used to be the home of an Evenflo Bottle Company, and those people would like to see a little investment in economic development in that community. It used to be the home of a glass plant. It used to be the home of a cabinet factory. They're all gone.

It is a beautiful area, some of the most beautiful parts of America. It is the best hunting and fishing in America, and tourism is the only tool they have that's working. This Hunting and Fishing Museum is another tool to try to keep hunters and fishermen and travelers and visitors to visit that part of the area.

Another thing, its interactive displays teach young people about hunting and fishing. We have a lot of people today that don't have fathers at home teaching them to hunt and fish. The Hunting and Fishing Museum is going to have classes. They're going to have classrooms. They're going to teach young people the joy of hunting and fishing. I find you take a young man and you teach him to fish, you teach him to hunt, you get him involved in a sport, he's less likely to be in crimes, drugs and on the streets.

It's a part of the fiber of America. There is no urban museum that isn't loaded with Federal dollars to build it.

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Rural museums don't have that same pathway. I defy a museum in America that doesn't have Federal funding in it.

Because a little community asks for 50 or 100,000, this is some sort of a crime?

I'm sorry. I'm not going to apologize. I served Forest County as a State House member, a State senator and now a Congressman. I ran a business within 10 miles, and many of these people were customers of mine when I had a supermarket. These are good people fighting for their economic lives trying to build this museum.

The State has allocated \$4 million, but they have to get matching money. This \$100,000 will get them another \$100,000 from the State, because as they raise money, they get money. I gladly debate this museum. It's a good investment for the future for Forest County and for America.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. FLAKE. Mr. Chairman, nobody is suggesting that it is a crime to support this kind of earmark, nor would it be a crime to actually deny funding for it. That's what the process is about.

My complaint, and nobody has suggested either, that there's this pure process at the Federal agency level. It's dysfunctional. We haven't provided the type of oversight that we need to.

The fact that there is an account over there to actually fund economic development projects suggests to me that it's out of control, that that's what we are about, what we should be about. We control the Federal purse strings. It should be in our interest actually to rein in spending over there rather than trying to compete with it and say if they do effect spending on this project or that, whomever has the district, that we shouldn't compete with that here and say, well, we can do one, one-up them with the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. If they had funded another hall of fame, we should say, is it the Federal Government's role to fund these? That's what I am questioning here.

If we can fund teapot museums and mule museums and hunting and fishing museums, what is off limits? What would come here that we could say we are not going to fund that? We could fund a mule museum. How about a donkey museum. Is that out of line? Where do we say enough is enough, and where do we say let's give the taxpayer a break?

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PETERSON of Pennsylvania. According to the Department of Transportation in 2005, his area received \$580 million for its construction of a \$1.4 billion, that's a pretty big percentage, of a 19.6 mile light rail system serving metropolitan Phoenix.

Why should people from Forest County have to pay that? I should make that argument. We can use it. Mass transit gets huge amounts of money, and Arizona gets lots of that. The largesse goes to the urban areas that have the ability to get it.

One thing about the earmark process, I am not saying it's perfect, but I have